

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Official Action mailed May 18, 2004, the period for filing a response being due August 18, 2004. In view of the above amendments and below remarks, reconsideration of the pending application is respectfully requested.

Applicant has cancelled dependent claims 45, 46, 48 and 49 to overcome the objection to these claims under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c). Applicant has also amended dependent claim 47 to provide sufficient antecedent basis for the claimed limitation.

The Examiner has objected to claim 31 contending that the first and second end couplings in the claim should be reversed. The Examiner's attention is directed to Applicant's specification, paragraph [0063] and Fig. 8 wherein the first end coupling is designated as reference No. 142 and the second end coupling as reference No. 144. This is consistent with claim 31. Applicant addressed this issue in the amendments in Applicant's prior Amendment of August 26, 2003. Applicant has amended dependent claims 25, 50 and 51 which will aid in clarifying any confusion the Examiner has with respect to the first and second end couplings. Accordingly, all issues raised by the Examiner in the Official Action have now been overcome, and notice to that effect is respectfully requested. As all claims pending in this application are in now condition for allowance, notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

As it is believed that all of the rejections set forth in the Official Action have been fully met, favorable reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited.

If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, it is respectfully requested that she telephone Applicant's attorney

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at (908) 654-5000 in order to overcome any additional objections which she might have.

If there are any additional charges in connection with this requested amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095 therefor.

Dated: June 3, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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